

Larry Bivins, *St. Cloud Times*

WASHINGTON - Just hours before casting her vote, Rep. Michele Bachmann vowed to carry on the effort to repeal the health care law, even if it means helping to gain a Republican majority in the Senate to make that happen.

Bachmann, R-Stillwater, told colleagues on the House floor that she would do whatever is necessary to thwart implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which President Barack Obama signed into law last March.

"I will not stop until we repeal this bill," Bachmann said.

Shortly afterward, she voted to do that. Bachmann joined her 241 Republican colleagues and three Democrats in voting for repeal, outnumbering the 189 Democrats who voted to keep the law.

Bachmann said the law, which Republicans refer to derisively as Obamacare, was too costly and gives the federal government too much control over the nation's health care system.

"This will break the bank, and we won't let that happen," she said.

House Republicans have been at odds with the Congressional Budget Office, a nonpartisan agency that estimates the cost of legislation. While Republicans contend the health care law would add \$700 billion to the deficit, the CBO has said that the health care law would reduce the nation's deficit but that repealing it would widen the gap by \$230 billion.

The White House and House Democrats have countered that repealing the health care law would put tens of millions of Americans with chronic illnesses at risk of losing their insurance or not getting coverage, would make it more difficult for seniors to pay for prescription drugs and would force them to co-pay for preventive services like mammograms and colonoscopies.

Rep. Betty McCollum, D-St. Paul, said repealing the health care law would also rescind

expanded services for American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

"Two million American Indians and Alaskan Natives would have vital health care services stripped by House Republicans," McCollum said. "Defending patient protections for all Americans is a priority for me. I will continue to fight against all Republican efforts to repeal health care reform."

Obama said in a statement Tuesday that although he was willing to work on improving the law, "we can't go backwards. Americans deserve the freedom and security of knowing that insurance companies can't deny, cap or drop their coverage when they need it the most, while taking meaningful steps to curb runaway health costs."

The repeal effort is likely to hit a wall when it reaches the Senate, where Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., has said it will not make it to the floor. And Obama has threatened to veto any repeal measure that comes to his desk.

Bachmann challenged the notion that the House vote was largely symbolic.

"This is not symbolic," she said. "This is why we were sent here."

And if the Senate fails to go along, Bachmann said, "we will put in a Senate that will listen to the American people," referring to the 2012 elections.